Food in Rabbinic Judaism
Spring 2011
Hebrew and Semitic Studies 278
Jewish Studies 278
Religious Studies 278

Instructor:
Professor Jordan D. Rosenblum
Office: Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies, 1340 Van Hise Hall
Office Hours: TuTh 9:00-10:00 am and by appointment
E-mail: jrosenblum@wisc.edu

Course Hours:
Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:15 pm

Prerequisite(s):
This course assumes no prior knowledge of Hebrew and/or Judaism, but a love of food is highly recommended.

Course Description:
When considering the kosher laws, people often think of the prohibitions of pork, mixing milk and meat, and eating food not prepared under rabbinic supervision. However, only the pork prohibition is explicit in the Hebrew Bible. The other two are found only in rabbinic literature. Rabbinic Judaism greatly expands upon biblical legislation, innovating a wide array of food practices. Focusing on rabbinic texts, students will explore how and why these novel approaches to food come about. In doing so, students will see how food has been shaped by – and, in turn, shapes – rabbinic Judaism. In order to complete this perspective, the course includes an examination of the modern impact of early rabbinic decisions on food practices. Come hungry to learn!

Course Goals:
Through guided reading in the classroom and at home, students will learn how to read historical documents and to assess various theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of food and culture. Students will further develop these analytical skills through several writing assignments, both in class and take home. Finally, students will understand the literature and historical development of rabbinic Judaism.

Classroom Etiquette:
Students are expected to arrive on time and should not engage in private conversations during class. While laptops are allowed in class, students should use their computers for taking notes and not for surfing the web, sending e-mails, etc. There is no reason for a student to be talking or sending texts on his/her cellular phone during class time. This is distracting to both professor and students. Students whose behavior in class is disruptive can expect a significant reduction in their final grade.
Requirements and Grading:

(1) Regular class attendance of lectures and careful preparation of assigned texts are considered essential aspects of this course. Please bring the assigned texts to class each week. For most class days, there is a text or group of texts highlighted for special consideration, which students are expected to have examined in detail prior to the class. On occasion, a short additional primary text may be assigned. In grading papers and tests, I will be particularly concerned that you are learning the material and concepts that are taught in class sessions. Prior learning of Jewish sources is not a substitute for doing the work required by this course.

(2) Attendance and participation: 10%. Active involvement in class is highly important and includes attendance as well as participation in class discussion.

(3) Two papers: 20% each; 40% total. Two short papers, no more than three typed, double-spaced pages, will be assigned on January 27 and March 24 and are due at the beginning of class on February 22 and April 14. No e-mail submissions will be accepted. For each 24-hour period that a paper is late, the student’s grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

(4) Response Paper: 5%. Students are required to attend one CJS lecture during the semester (information available online at: http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/lectures/) and to write a one-page response paper. The structure of the response paper is as follows: one paragraph summarizing the content and thesis of the lecture and one paragraph of your own critical assessment of the lecture. The response paper must be submitted in hard copy within one week of the lecture. Late papers will not be accepted.

(5) In-Class Midterm: 20%. There will be one midterm, given in class on March 10. It will address the readings and class discussions up to that point.

(6) Final Exam: 25%. The final exam, given on May 11 from 10:05 am – 12:05 pm, will be cumulative and will address issues covered in the readings and class discussions. Students must take the final exam at the scheduled time.

(7) You may sign up for honors credit, which can be a very productive way of exploring your own interests in relation to the topics of the course. If you do so, it is your responsibility to talk with the professor to arrange your honors work in the first two weeks of the semester.

**Students are expected to bring relevant texts in hard copy to every class**

Honor Code:

Students are expected to follow the University of Wisconsin-Madison Academic Honor Code. If students have any questions about this policy, please speak with the professor. More information on plagiarism can be found at: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html
**Extension Policy:**
Extensions on papers and exams will **not** be granted. For each 24-hour period that a paper is late, the student’s grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

**Required Books:**
4. Electronic Reserve: Learn@UW (*R*)
**All books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore**

**Class Schedule:**

**January 18**
Introduction
Reading: JE, “Introduction,” 1-8

**January 20**
Food, Identity, History, Gender, and Culture

**January 25**
Cookbooks as Historical Documents; Psychology and Food

**January 27**
Rabbinic Antecedents I: Biblical Food Laws
*Paper 1 topics distributed*

**February 1**
Rabbinic Antecedents II: Second Temple Period

**February 3**
The Rabbinic Period
Reading: JE, “The Rabbinic Period: ‘Thou Shalt Not Eat a Calf with a Mother’s Milk,’” 39-54 (focus on *m. Hullin* 8:1; *b. Hullin* 104b-105a, discussed on pp. 41-44)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>The Rabbinic Period</td>
<td>Reading: <em>JE</em>, “The Rabbinic Period: Problematic Mixings” 55-72 (focus on <em>m. Avodah Zarah</em> 2:3-6 [pp. 66-67] and the texts discussed on pp. 56-57 and 61-62)</td>
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<td>February 10</td>
<td>The Rabbinic Period</td>
<td>Reading: <em>JE</em>, “The Rabbinic Period: Blessing Food,” 73-86 (focus on <em>t. Berakhot</em> 4:1 [p. 75] and <em>m. Berakhot</em> 6:1-5, 7 [pp. 77 and 79])</td>
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<td>February 15</td>
<td>Rabbinic Food in the Medieval Period I</td>
<td>Reading: <em>JE</em>, “Waiting for the Next Meal,” 87-97 (focus on the texts discussed on pp. 91-92 and 94-95)</td>
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<td>February 17</td>
<td>Rabbinic Food in the Medieval Period II</td>
<td>Reading: <em>JE</em>, “Separating the Dishes,” 99-121 (focus on <em>b. Hullin</em> 111b [p. 100] and the texts discussed on pp. 101-103, 111, and 116)</td>
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<td>February 24</td>
<td>Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period</td>
<td>Reading: <em>JE</em>, “Crossing Boundaries,” 123-145 (focus on the texts discussed on pp. 138-139)</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period: Immigration and Food I</td>
<td>Reading: <em>HA</em>, “A Set Table: Jewish Food and Class in Eastern Europe,” 146-177</td>
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<td>March 8</td>
<td>Kosher Wars</td>
<td>Reading: <em>JE</em>, “‘Bugs in the System’ (The Kosher Wars),” 147-172 (focus on the texts discussed on p. 158); Patricia Marx, “Kosher Takeout: Supervising a Food-production Boom,” 1-6 (<em>R</em>)</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>MIDTERM (in class)</td>
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<td>March 12-20</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>The Bagel: Food as History; Food Politics</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>The Bagel and Matzah: (Un)Leavened History</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>The Bagel: Food as Metonym</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>April 7</td>
<td>Modern Kosher Food Ethics</td>
<td>Laurie Zoloth: “‘When You Plow the Field, Your Torah Is with You’: Genetic Modification and GM Food in the Jewish Tradition(s),” 81-110 (R)</td>
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<td>April 14</td>
<td>Passover: Ritual Performance and Table Talk</td>
<td>Passover haggadah (R)</td>
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<td>April 19-21</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Passover</td>
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April 26  Movie Screening: “Leon The Pig Farmer”
Reading: Jordan Rosenblum, “‘Why do you refuse to eat pork?’: Jews, Food, and Identity in Roman Palestine,” 1-19 (focus on *Genesis Rabbah* 65:1 [pp. 17-18] and the texts discussed on pp. 13-14) (R)

April 28  Movie Screening and Discussion: “Leon The Pig Farmer”
Reading: Nathan Abrams, “‘I’ll Have Whatever She’s Having’: Jews, Food, and Film,” 87-100 (R)

May 3  The Culinary Jew: The Deli as Test Case
Reading: David Sax, “From Pushcarts to $15 Sandwiches: A Nosh of New York Deli History,” 20-36; Sue Fishkoff, “Pastrami on Rye: The Jewish Deli,” 91-108 (R)

May 5  Conclusions
Reading: Laurence Roth, “Toward a Kashrut Nation in American Jewish Cookbooks, 1990-2000,” 65-91 (R)

May 11  FINAL EXAM
10:05 am – 12:05 pm